



HIAWATHA NATIONAL FOREST NEWS RELEASE

USDA – Forest Service

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Hiawatha Brings Economic Recovery Funds to Upper Peninsula: *County Road 513 Project*



Escanaba, MI – “Economic recovery funding puts us on the road to safer travel in Delta County,” says Forest Supervisor Thomas Schmidt of Hiawatha National Forest in Michigan.

Approximately 35 private sector jobs will be created to widen and re-surface Delta County Road 513. The project has received \$3,500,000 in economic recovery funding. The local community and visitors will benefit from safer and easier travel to school and work, as well as easier access to high-use Forest Service recreation sites such as Peninsula Point Lighthouse and Bay de Noc Campground.

Schmidt expressed his appreciation for the cooperation between the Forest Service and Delta County Road Commission (DCRC). The project will be completed cooperatively with the DCRC.

“In addition to the Forest Service Economic Recovery funds, DCRC is contributing \$489,861 to the project budget using Economic Stimulus funds distributed by the State of Michigan,” notes Rob VanEffen, Managing Director for DCRC.

According to Hiawatha engineering program coordinator, Joe Hallenbeck, the project design is almost complete.

Hallenbeck says, “Once MDOT approves the plans, the project will be contracted through their letting process.”

Rob VanEffen added, “We hope to advertise the construction contract by the end of May and award it in mid-to-late July. If things come together, we could

start work as early as late July and be done by the end of October.”

Regional Forester Kent Connaughton, the top executive for the Eastern Region of the Forest Service agrees. “The initial projects selected for funding come from a larger group of very fine projects still under consideration for selection,” he notes.

Nationally, almost \$63 million worth of Forest Service projects creating hundreds of private-sector jobs have been funded. The remaining projects to be funded, valued at \$1.052 billion, will be announced in the coming weeks. They will create approximately 23,500 more jobs nationwide.

“One thing we noticed as we looked at the many projects submitted from all over the Region, was how these projects help put people back to work, while also providing long-term benefits in terms of developing new skills, enhancing local resources, or adding value to our communities, counties, and partners,” he adds.

“That made choosing the top projects for consideration at the national level both a challenge and a privilege.”

Thirty-two projects were approved on National Forests in eighteen state, for a total of \$62,957,200. This includes 7 projects in six states (Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Wisconsin) within the Forest Service’s Eastern Region, for a total of \$7,426,000 (11.9 percent of the total).

For more information, contact: Janel Crooks or Bill Bowman, Hiawatha NF, 906-789-4062.

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